THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE, INC.

ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT, U. S. A. 06111

ROY L. ALBRIGHT, W5EYB, DIRECTOR, WEST GULF DIVISION
107 ROSEMARY, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78209
TELEPHONE: 512-822-7269

HARRY J. DANNALS W2TUK, PRESIDENT
VICTOR C. CLARK W4KFC, FIRST VICE PRES.
NOEL B. EATON VE3CJ, VICE PRES.
CARL L. SMITH W#BWJ, VICE PRES.
DAVID H. HOUGHTON TREASURER
JOHN HUNTOON WIRW, SEC. & GEN. MGR.

TO: ALL ARRL MEMBERS
WEST GULF DIVISION

20 June, 1975

QST OFFICIAL JOURNAL

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR.

LEAGUE MEMBER RESPONSE TERRIFIC!

56,000 ARRL members responded to the League's request for membership opinion regarding the FCC proposed Docket 20282. Over 50,000 replies reached headquarters in time to be included in the summary. The others were available to the directors for perusal. NEVER BEFORE IN HISTORY HAS SUCH RESPONSE BEEN RECEIVED! In addition to the survey form, thousands wrote their director, elaborating on the questionnaire, or emphasizing their opinions.

The message in the bulk of the replies was crystal clear: "This is no time to take any existing privilege away from any amateur." This theme ran throughout the computer analysis, and was even more evident in the narrative responses received by directors. Therefore, in compliance with the preponderance of expressed members' opinions, this concept will be the basis of the League's response to the docket.

A somewhat surprising reaction pertained to the subject of CW. While many amateurs agree that CW is no longer as important as formerly, the respondees in all license classes were most emphatic that every amateur should be required to have some knowledge of code.

The proposed "Experimenter" license met a flat negative response. Most members failed to see acceptable justification for imposition of another setp in the ladder between Technician and Extra Class.

Also, the 'dual ladder' licensing system was not favorably considered. It appeared to be obvious to our members that a dual ladder structure would do more harm than good, in that it would divide us, and seriously impede our necessary flexibility; a point which appears to have escaped authors of the docket. For example, one aspect is that an increasingly great number of amateurs are taking seriously our obligation to render a badly needed public service during emergencies. That obligation is given strength by the advent of repeaters. The proposal would require one to hold an Extra Class, or two licenses, in order to pass traffic from the local repeater system to the HF traffic nets. While it might be argued that in time of emergency that rule would be overlooked, one must admit that prior training, by repetitive use, during non-emergency periods is essential, if a system is to function during the stress of urgent need.

As was expected, our greatest problem was with the "Communicator" class license proposal. Much ado has been made about the reputed 'serious' drop in numbers of licenses since 1971. The excuse for proposing a 'walk-in' amateur band operating permit has publicly been based upon the premise that such easy entry will solve a band population problem. It appears no one considered that the major probable reasons for a decline in our numbers most likely was the imposition of a $9.00 license fee - plus the fact that thousands are flocking to the CB band, without bothering to stop at the FCC office on the way. We think this latter is more nearly the real excuse for proposing the new license. In other words - hand the unsolvable problem to the radio amateurs, since they so consistently brag about their self-policing.

Responses to the survey indicate general acceptance of the concept of a lower class amateur license, provided certain safeguards can be erected to protect the integrity of the amateur traditions of a valuable service to the community, rather than a self-serving entity. Therefore the the league proposes safeguards be:

a. Call the new license "Basic Amateur" rather than Communicator.
b. Limit authorized power to 50 watts.
c. Authorize operation in a limited portion of 2-meters, but do not permit use of repeater in this band.
d. Authorize operation on 222-225 Mhz, including use of repeaters therein, if repeaters happen to be operational on those freqs.
e. License term to be 5 years, re-obtainable only only upon reexamination.
f. Require some knowledge of code, without specific speed being required.
g. Written examination to be the same as for the Novice.
h. Examination to be administered by TWO proxy examiners, of General Class or higher.

Other ARRL recommendations: That amateurs of a given class be authorized all privileges of lower class licensees. Technicians should be permitted to use all frequencies above 29.0 Mhz, and that tests (both theory and code) should be administered on the same basis as General Class (i.e., by FCC or other Government personnel). Technicians, Conditionals and Generals should retain all current privileges of (1) license renewability (including without need for re-exam by Conditionals when moving within 175 mi. of examining point), (2) Mode, frequency and power, and (3) holding of special station licenses, trusteeship, etc. (4) Novice term and renewability to be same as Basic Amateur.

The League also recommends no changes in privileges currently authorized Advanced and Extra Class except as follows: a. Advanced should regain privilege of joint occupancy with Extra Class of 21,250-21,270 Mhz. b. In order to release pressure on 20 meter fone band the league recommends Extra Class be authorized a new exclusive fone segment of 14,175 - 14,200 Khz. This latter area is currently practically unoccupied by US amateurs. Authorizing use by Extra Class will not seriously affect Canadian occupants, and will provide considerable impetus to upgrade license class by Advanced and Generals.

Another recommendation that has been long overdue is revision of code speed requirements. We recommend: 5 wpm for Novices and Techs, 10 wpm for Generals, Conditionals, 15 wpm for Advanced, and 20 wpm for Extra Class, with all currently licensed Generals, Conditionals and Advanced to be given credit for 15 wpm. Years of experience has conclusively demonstrated that 13 wpm presents an obstacle so difficult that many Generals and Technicians need considerable air practice to overcome the hump at 13 wpm. Practically all our 'old timers' who now possess high speed code capability acquired that facility by being permitted entering operating privileges upon passing only 10 wpm exam. Also, the transceivers used by most amateurs today do not have the capability to permit practice by copying the numerous commercial stations, as did the general coverage feature of many receivers no longer available.

Other items: The League recommends no change in current power authorizations, except the method of computing power by novices. Generals to be authorized A1 operation in the 50.0-50.1 Mhz segment. Advanced Class be able to apply for a preferred "1x3" call sign.

We concurred in the FCC proposals relating to issuance of a life-time license for Extras, and the change in name from Amateur Extra to Extra. However, we recommended that the written examination for upgrading from Advanced to Extra be retained.

Also, because of the complexity involved, we recommend the method of determining power levels continue to be based upon plate power imput.

There were additional minor items addressed by the board. However, the basic theme that no amateur should lose any current privilege will be consistently adheredto in our filing with FCC. More details restructuring will appear in July QST.

COMMENTS REGARDING THE SURVEY

While responses from the membership were quite uniform, there obviously was difference of opinion. This was also true when we 16 directors assembled in Hartford on 15 May to examine the survey conclusions. Many of us held (and continue to hold) strong opinions on certain aspects of restructuring. The ad hoc committee (of which your director was a member) prepared the ground rules for the board's discussions. The special committee appointed by the president of ARRL (our Vice Director, Jack Gant served on that committee) consolidated and reduced the ad hoc committee's 67 guide lines to a more concise format. In its long hours of deliberating the board recognized that considerable compromise of individual opinion would be necessary in order to attain conclusions for presentation which would be based upon the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number over the long pull. The fact that we did arrive at what appears to be a set of excellent recommendations we believe every open minded amateur can support, is a tribute to the very fine membership response to the survey.

It is fervently hoped the Federal Communications Commission will accept the ARRL recommendations in toto, and formulate the report and order accordingly.

It became evident, when the Executive Committee met on 7-8 June to consider the draft of the league's recommendations, that additional time would be necessary in order to properly phrase our presentation and supply additional and adequate rationale. Therefore Counsel Booth obtained FCC permission to extend the deadline for comments to 16 July.

It is hoped that league members will individually file comment with FCC recommending adoption of the ARRL proposals.

****

COMING EVENTS

OKLAHOMA HAM HOLIDAY & OKLAHOMA STATE ARRL CONVENTION - 2-3 August, Oklahoma City. ARRL will be represented by Tom McMullen from the technical staff of QST, by W. Gulf Director Roy Albright, and Vice Director Jack Gant.

TEXAS VHF FM SOCIETY SUMMER CONVENTION - 2-3 August, Temple, Texas. Guest of honor and principal speaker will again be Mr. A PROSE WALKER, Chief, Amateur and Citizens Division, Federal Communications Commission.

(We regret the above major events are scheduled for the same date. Many of would like to attend both. Unfortunately that is impossible again this year. We hope for better coordination in years to come. SW Radio Council please note).

GOLDEN SPREAD SWAPFEST, Amarillo, Texas, August 23-24.

ARRL NATIONAL CONVENTION, Reston, Virginia, 13-14 September. (Reston is a couple of miles from Dulles Airport, Washington, CD).

EL PASO HAMFEST, El Paso, Texas, 20-21 September.

TIDELANDS HAMFEST, Galveston, Texas, Sunday 5 October.

OKLAHOMA HAMARAMA, Lake Texoma, Oklahoma, 25-26 October.

****

QST CHANGES SIZE

Beginning with the January, 1976 issue, QST will be published in a new larger size, 8½"x11". While this change will be somewhat disconcerting to those of us who retain files of QST, there are a number of advantages. The old 6½x9½"" format has been non-standard for years. This has caused excessive cutting waste in printing the magazine and only a limited number of presses now will accomodate that size. By going to a standard size we were able to get a printing contract at a better price, and more favorably located for shipment (Kentucky vs New Hampshire). However, the biggest bonus for readers will be larger type, - - and capability to print more printed-circuit layouts full size. We understand certain other 'Ham' magazines will follow suit.

****

FLASH - Just as we prepare to go to press comes the news that long-time friend and former Assistant Director BILL TODD, W5UZX passed away Sunday, 15 June. Bill was a great amateur, widely known, and highly respected by all who knew him. His many friends will view his passing with regret.

****

W1AW NEWS SERVICE

Dissemination of important information in a timely manner continues to be a problem. The best way to keep abreast of developments in amateur radio is by regularly copying W1AW. 20-meter band propagation for reception from league headquarters is generally best in the afternoon. Whe have hundreds of retired and disabled who have time to copy these broadcasts. It is recommended this group make a practice of copying official bulletins at 3:30 p.m. daily, Monday thru Friday, frequency 14,080 Khz, and read the contents on Traffic Nets, and at other times when groups are present.

****

Linking of more than two repeater stations will be permitted effective July 11, 1975. Rules will require the licensees of each participating station to submit a system network diagram showing all related stations in the system, including an auxiliary link station which might be used to effect the interconnection. Such station interconnection would not relieve any licensee. Trustees, and control operators of the proper responsibility for proper operation of their station. This is a most important concession by the Commission in that it will give added impetus to the Texas Intercity Relay System development. Perhaps now the Houston and East Texas groups will initiate plans to construct link stations with TIRS for what might well be a most valuable service during tornadoes and hurricanes.

****

We are informed the 700+ member SMIRK (Sic Meter International Radio Klub) has changed its net operation time to 10:00 p.m. Texas Time. The net operates on 50.2 Mhz SSB; however, CW and AM stations are welcome.

****

The new ARRL 1975/1976 Repeater Directory is now available. To obtain it, send $1.00 (50 cents to ARRL members) to Hq ARRL, 225 Main St. Newington, Conn. 06111. Over 1600 repeaters are listed.

****

Incidentally - I am most pleased to announce the West Gulf Division has had an increase in ARRL membership in each of the last six years. We are now some 25% above the figure for 1 January, 1969. Let's continue to publicize the need for all active radio amateurs to be members of the League. I have membership application blanks, if needed.

****

Finally, let me say I would like to have given a personal note to each of the 1,300+ of you who took the time to write me regarding the restructuring proposal. Unfortunately, the directorship is a one-man operation (with considerable assistance from a most cooperative wife), therefore individual replies are not possible. I wish to assure everyone however, that every word in each letter was read and carefully considered, and evaluated against the total responses. The letters were indeed most valuable, and made my job at the board meeting a much easier task.

While hundreds of the comments were most enlightening, I would like to share three of them with you:

"A primary objection I have to the docket is that it has arisen, not as a motion by amateurs to improve the service, but from outside amateur radio by persons/agencies bent on changing this time-honored service for commercial purposes and expansion of privileges to low-grade hobbyists at the expense of spectrum and privileges of the existing higher grade amateurs. - - - - Let's oppose all forms of "improvement" which is disguised self-interest of industry and hobby groups wanting to tear down a prideful organization to take away what was developed and maintained. If they get it, it will not last long, then neither they nor we will have it." K5BQA.

"How can one use what he refuses to learn?" - W5COD.

"Present license requirements and privileges are our prestige over CB'ers and those too lazy to be willing to work to attain a license." - WN5LXT.

73,

Roy

ROY L. ALBRIGHT, W5EYB
Director.